



# Thycotic Privileged Password Management Case Study

## Privileged Password Management does double duty as proactive security defense at Saab

“Thycotic makes sure our ‘keys to the kingdom’ are secure from hackers and any potential misuse from inside our organization.”

Per Hammarin, Vice President & CEO  
Saab Defense and Security USA, LLC

As vice president and CIO at Saab Defense and Security USA LLC, Per Hammarin manages a 10 member IT team in Washington, DC which is part of a parent organization based in Sweden. Over more than 30 years and progressive positions within the civil aircraft and defense subsidiary of the company known for its iconic automobiles, Per has worked all over the world in IT management roles.

In 2010, Hammarin helped to select Thycotic Secret Server enterprise edition as the privileged account management tool for the Saab Defense and Security parent company of 300 plus users worldwide, and has been using it directly with his IT team in the US since then.

At the time, the IT operations of Saab Defense and Security were transitioning from a highly fragmented organization to a single, consolidated entity that would combine five different departments.

### **SIMPLE, EASY TO USE AND EFFECTIVE PRIVILEGED PASSWORD PROTECTION**

“We wanted to consolidate our privileged credentials into a manageable solution that would help us get beyond the non-scalable solution previously in place for administrative users,” Hammarin recalled.

“We were looking for a much more secure yet simpler, automated product that was web-based and could be accessed from any device.”

Thycotic Secret Server fit the bill on several levels according to Hammarin. “We found in Secret Server a product that was simple, easy to look at, and easy to understand,” he said. “You don’t have to read a hundred page manual or hire professional services to figure out how the system works.”

### **A PROACTIVE SECURITY DEFENSE TOOL**

Most important, Thycotic Secret Server had to be able to scale across the global operations of Saab Defense and Security, including its headquarters in Sweden with 30 times more users. In choosing Thycotic Secret Server Enterprise Plus edition, Saab Defense and Security gained what Hammarin describes as a “proactive security solution.”

“Of course Secret Server is a security tool that helps us manage the passwords and access to all our key functionality, but we also consider it a proactive security defense tool,” he said. While Secret Server provides a “fail-safe” method whereby users can perform functions without direct access to passwords, Hammarin pointed to additional insights he gets from the product for security purposes.

“You have to recognize that the sooner or later, an unauthorized person may get into your system; it’s just a matter of time,” Hammarin emphasized. “And if that happens, the odds are they will not be easily detected for months—the average time is now about 180 days



before an intrusion with compromised credentials is discovered.” Secret Server will have replaced the majority of our credentials with new passwords many times in that timeframe, making a brute force attack against an extracted SAM database less viable.

Hammarin explained that Thycotic Secret Server provides him with the visibility into privileged credential usage he needs to track activity and spot anomalies that indicate unusual or unauthorized behaviors.

“Thycotic lets me observe what secrets my users are looking at. I can see if a client person is looking at router passwords and if there is something unusual in their activity. I feel that I get, not only control, but the essential visibility into what my team is doing in regard to their job duties.”

## **EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP YIELDS MUTUAL BENEFITS**

Over the years, Hammarin has developed a close, working relationship with Thycotic that has resulted in product improvements now enjoyed by all Secret Server enterprise customers. One example is the “Heartbeat” functionality in Secret Server that allows Hammarin to confirm that passwords issued in Secret Server match passwords on servers throughout the network. In response to Hammarin’s feedback, Thycotic developed the capability to automatically test a privileged account’s credentials at set intervals, and alert administrators if credentials are changed outside of Secret Server. Heartbeat also tells Hammarin when an administrator changes a privileged password without his knowledge.

“I am totally impressed by how Thycotic has grown since we started our first dialogue,” said Hammarin. “We’ve worked on all sorts of issues, and I think Thycotic a very responsive organization. I’ve enjoyed dealing with everybody.”

Today, Secret Server plays an integral role in Saab operations globally, centralizing the protection of privileged credentials while saving time and making administrators jobs more efficient and effective.

“I get visibility into what my team is actually doing with privileged credentials,” Hammarin said in summary. “I see what secrets my users are looking at. I can see if a user is looking at router passwords and immediately question actions that don’t appear right.

“I appreciate that Thycotic is continuously evolving its products and support,” he concluded. “That means we are both in this together for the long term to make sure our ‘keys to the kingdom’ are secure from hackers and any potential misuse from inside our organization.”